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events

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norvananewsletter@cprna.org

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Facing Deportation in Narcotics Anonymous – Leo R.

I am Leo R. and I am an addict. My clean date is January 19, 2015. I came to Narcotics Anonymous to help me reduce I felony drug charge to a misdemeanor. I would go to meetings twice a week, three times and week and sometimes 2 or three times a day. I know that I definitely plugged in when I finally surrendered. I felt plugged into the program, and everything was great!

Then August 11, 2015, I had awoken by my family at my home. It was a police officer. I went to the door calmly because everything was going well with my probation officer as well as being current with all of my court costs. They immediately handcuffed and arrested me on a deportation warrant. My family and I started cry. They told my family that they could call immigration if they had any questions. They took me to Alexandria to a holding facility. I was there for 2 hours before being handcuffed again and actually *shackled*. At the Immigration building in Fairfax there was a tank that I was kept in for four hours. Finally I got some news. In January, I had plead guilty to felony criminal charges and because I had done this Obama’s new law had kicked in against me. The new law said that any immigrant in the U.S. that plead guilty to a criminal charge would have to go up for immigration to face possible

deportation. I had no idea at all about this law. So now I had to be detained for 14 days until seeing the judge. I was so awful. I was clean and locked up again. Here I was in a pink cloud, and all of the sudden my world was crashing down again. I couldn't use the phone to call anybody.

They shackled and handcuffed me *again* and put me in a van for a two hour ride. We went to Farmville VA. Reality kept sinking in and pain kept rising. The whole time my mind was racing. I was so pissed off at life, at God, my sponsor, my family, at life. I was just so over it all. I was clean, working a program, following the rules, and I felt totally bamboozled. I told myself I was going back to Columbia and that I was just going to use. Drugs are readily available there. This sucks and my life is done and over. I was so hopeless and felt worthless. I'll never forget first arriving there. The place was double fenced in a barbed wired. We were given clothes and food, and medical help. They looked at me crazy when I asked them if they had some sort of recovery program, because *that's what I knew*. Recovery was my routine. I had been getting up every morning and praying, reading my literature and calling people. Now I had nothing but pajamas and flip flops. They told me all they had in there was A.A. and that someone would have to evaluate me to see if I was eligible even for those classes. My dorm was about 40 people in bunk beds. I was so terrified of the others. After no sleep. The morning no fun either. Everything was so public and open so everyone could see what was going on, even in the showers. There were gang members, rapists and murderers there and were brought there for the same reason as me, deportation. I began to keep to myself and read. I had no idea what to do and just kept feeling more sick and insane. I was just waiting on someone to try to harm me. When I could use the phone I called my family first to reassure them, then I called my sponsor.

Right away he began to give me a valuable lesson about being calmer. It was a process. He reassured me I would be okay even though my future was unknown which built faith. My sponsor was able to get me a basic text out to me that I started to read daily in the morning. Finally I got my letter saying that I had ten days to my court date. Till then, I began to go to the law library. I studied books and leaned about my case. Sadly, I learned that there was slim chance I was going to get a bond with a felony charge. I kept calling my sponsor and my family. My sponsor gave me a fellow addicts number and talking with them helped a lot. There was just so much waiting in there.

Miraculously, I had been working a lot on patience and sitting still with my sponsor previous to this event. This time it was not time for practice but for

doing. I was so powerless over the whole scary situation. There was literally nothing I could do but try to work a program to the best of my ability. Nothing. My life, my future was in someone else's hands. I met with some lawyers interns and they told me my case was definitely beat-able. People were getting deported left and right around me, and thankfully my family found a lawyer that would help me fight the case for me. I constantly tried to remain calm and believe that wither I won my case and went home, or even had to go back to Columbia after thirty years that I would be okay. I started to feel grateful even in there for three meals and a place to stay. I stayed in a good rut of getting up, praying, reading the literature as much as possible. I *had* to all of this for my sanity. I was around people who were in the life and in there with me using. They constantly talked about drugs, weapons and sex and I just *couldn't* relate anymore. I started to ask God for help. I started to help the other inmates, as I had helped other addicts before by helping them in the law library too.

When It was time for me to see the judge they actually never used my character witnesses. They used my only **my** testimony. They actually called me a productive member of society! I had paid my taxes and worked in the U.S. for many years. I was apparent that I had definitely stopped using for a long time. **They let me go**, even though they knew I had made some bad choices in my life. They knew I was going to meetings and that I had sponsor. The judge saw how serious I was about the program and they liked that. The commented that really liked what I had been doing to turn my life around. They gave me a one-way ticket right then on the bus. Wow. *Was that a sign of hope or not!*

Things were rough when I finally got back to the rooms because of the blissful pink cloud I was on before I left. I had such a huge amount of hope and then bam, life on lifes terms showed up in an instant to me. I was left breathless. One thing I do know is that although I contemplated it, I NEVER, NEVER used. I knew in my heart of hearts it would **not** make things better for me. Two years later and things are different. With the way the government is now, if this had happened to me nowadays, I would be gone to Columbia. Because of the program of recovery I have found in Narcotics Anonymous, I would be okay. I am back to the basics now. Reaching out to people, praying, and writing on my step. I love my life today. I am forever grateful to the program of Narcotics Anonymous and that I am able to share my experience, strength and hope with you and I truly, truly hope this story will help others.

Step Nine – Naomi W.

“We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

So once again my sponsor told me that failure to do this step is a place for relapse to step in. Seems that’s always the case. I was not really ready for some reactions that I thought I may get, and honestly was blown away by some reactions I did get. They talk about doing things at the right time in this step. I am a procrastinator and I can be a coward. I had spent some time with a married man. He was using drugs with me at our job and we had a secret relationship. This is when I lived in Boston Massachusetts. I visit my mom from time to time. This one trip, my mom thought it would be a good idea to eat and visit my old job. Hesitantly I went along with her, knowing the amends I may have to make. When I saw the gentleman he was shocked to see me and it was apparent that after all these years, I had stopped using and he had not. The dead look in his eyes said it all. Even though I had a moment to talk to him, I cowered away after we got the check and left back to my mothers house. I called my sponsor and she said, “yet another missed opportunity for growth.” My mom was out of milk so I went to the store later that day and guess who was in the same aisle with me at the right time. The gentleman I owed amends to. I walked up to him and said, “I know it’s been years and I know we did what we did, but I am truly sorry for my part and I hope you can forgive me.” He barely remembered all that had actually transpired and laughed it off, but I had done my part and walking away I felt better. If his wife was there or if there was any sort of money owed, that may have been different, but I am grateful I did my part and now I feel a bit freer than before in my recovery. There are those back in my hometown that do not forgive me and that’s okay. Some family and friends will heal when they need to, not when I desperately need them to. My behavior clean speaks for itself and I know I must be patient. Step nine was very emotional but I am glad I did it for sure. I had to remember this Step is for me to grow in spirit and in faith in my recovery, and Just for today that is important to me.

Sep 8 2017 - Sep 9 2017 10:00 AM - 05:00 PM	Rappahannock Area Convention of NA <i>Hospitality House Hotel, Fredericksburg VA</i> Flyer	Sep 16 2017 02:00 PM - 10:00 PM	NA Cookout <i>Sligo Avenue Neighborhood Park (Sligo Urban), Silver Spring</i> Flyer
Sep 15 2017 - Sep 17 2017 10:00 AM - 05:00 PM	Tri County Area Unity Retreat Pt. 1 <i>Lions Camp Merrick, Nanjemoy MD</i> Flyer	Oct 6 2017 - Oct 8 2017 12:00 AM - 11:59 PM	Unity Weekend Campout! <i>Prince William Forest Park, Triangle VA</i> Flyer
Sep 15 2017 - Sep 17 2017 10:00 AM - 05:00 PM	Tri County Area Unity Retreat: Events & Registration Information Pt. 2 <i>Lions Camp Merrick, Nanjemoy MD</i> Flyer	Oct 6 2017 - Oct 8 2017 03:00 PM - 12:00 PM	NORVANA Special Events Committee: Unity Weekend Spiritual Retreat <i>Prince William Forest Park, Dumfries VA</i> Flyer